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Contact Whitney Ray

Phone 850-245-0150

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL STATE OF FLORIDA

Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

PG Hotline Expanded as Hurricane Sally Approaches Panhandle



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody today expanded Florida's Price Gouging Hotline to receive reports of unconscionable price increases on essential commodities in Bay, Calhoun, Escambia, Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Liberty, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, Walton and Washington counties. As these Florida counties are expected to fall within the predicted path of Hurricane Sally, Governor Ron DeSantis declared a state of emergency, issuing Executive Order 20-225 to include the above-mentioned counties. This followed an earlier declaration that covered Escambia and Santa Rosa only. With these declarations, Attorney General Moody expanded the Price Gouging Hotline to include consumer contacts relating to purchases of essential commodities made in these counties in preparation for the hurricane. Florida's price gouging laws for this event only apply within the areas of the declared state of emergency and only for commodities and services essential to preparing for or recovering from the storm event.

In addition to this new state of emergency regarding Hurricane Sally, a state of emergency also remains in effect for Hurricane Michael in certain North Florida counties. Additionally, the price gouging laws continue to apply statewide under the ongoing emergency declaration in response to the COVID-19 pandemic for commodities that relate specifically to the health crisis.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "We are at the peak of a very active hurricane season. Currently, the Atlantic Ocean has five tropical cyclones simultaneously, including Hurricane Sally. All Floridians should take this time to prepare for a potential storm. Ensuring you have the resources you need to get you and your family through a storm should be done now, not later. And as you prepare, if you see potential price gouging, do not hesitate to report it. My office

stands ready to stop gouging and protect consumers."

During a storm-related declared state of emergency, state law prohibits excessive increases in the price of essential commodities, such as food, water, hotel rooms, ice, gasoline, lumber and equipment, needed as a direct result of the event. Anyone who suspects price gouging should report it to the Attorney General's Office by using the NO SCAM app or by calling 1(866) 9NO-SCAM. The Attorney General's NO SCAM app can be downloaded for free through Apple and Android stores by searching NO SCAM.

Preparedness tips can be found by downloading the Attorney General's Hurricane Preparedness guide here.

For tips on reporting price gouging, click here. For more information on price gouging, please click here.

Earlier this month, Attorney General Moody issued information on National Preparedness Month. To view this information, click here.

For more information about price gouging associated with the statewide COVID-19 emergency declaration issued in March, click here.

Violators of the price gouging statute are subject to civil penalties of $1,000 per violation and up to a total of $25,000 for multiple violations committed in a single 24-hour period. In addition to the civil penalties for price gouging, state law criminalizes the sale of goods and services to the public without possession of a business tax receipt.